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To: Beck, Nancy [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=168ecb5184ac44de95a913297f353745-Beck, Nancy]
Subject: Morning Energy, presented by the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association: Where in the world is Rick Perry? — Pressure mounts to call Pruitt before EPW — BLM to hold ANWR hearing

By Kelsey Tamborrino | 06/15/2018 05:42 AM EDT

With help from Alex Guillén

WHERE IN THE WORLD IS RICK PERRY? The Energy secretary will confer with his G-20 counterparts today in Bariloche, Argentina, while he attends the second meeting of the Energy Transitions Working Group. Perry will participate in ministerial sessions and other bilateral meetings to discuss international energy challenges and solutions, according to DOE. The G-20 has described today's confab as discussions of "public policies to help promote transitions towards more flexible, more transparent and cleaner energy systems."

Much like the G-7 of last week, the summit will close with all nations signing onto a joint communique that outlines the energy chiefs' agreements. (You can watch the press conference here.) Since the agenda is prioritizing, among other things, "the lowering of inefficient subsidies to fossil fuels," ME is guessing Perry's not going to be any happier than President Donald Trump was in Canada last week given his push to prop up struggling coal power plants in the U.S. For his part, Perry has pitched Trump's "energy dominance" commitment before on an international stage, including ramping up natural gas and oil exports. ME will also be watching to see how Perry handles issues related to climate change.

The Paris climate agreement cast a shadow over last year's G-20 summit, where the president isolated himself from other nations on the issue. Just last week, Trump said the U.S. would not sign onto the G-7 communique in Canada because of trade concerns. And of course Trump has already promised to pull the U.S. out of the Paris accord, so the U.S. instead would only commit to "strengthen the world's collective energy security, including through policies that facilitates open, diverse, transparent, liquid and secure global markets for all energy sources."

IT'S FINALLY FRIDAY! I'm your host Kelsey Tamborrino, and Entergy's Rob Hall was the first to identify all four baseball teams former Kentucky Sen. Jim Bunning played for: the Detroit Tigers, Philadelphia Phillies, Pittsburgh Pirates and Los Angeles Dodgers. Now for something completely different: What was the name of the first pet cow former President William Howard Taft brought with him to the White House? Send your tips, energy gossip and comments to ktamborrino@politico.com, or follow us on Twitter [@kelseytam](https://twitter.com/kelseytam), [@Morning_Energy](https://twitter.com/Morning_Energy) and [@POLITICOPro](https://twitter.com/POLITICOPro).

POLITICO will be reporting from inside the World Gas Conference June 25 - June 29. Sign up now for our pop-up conference newsletter to receive on-the-ground insights and information every afternoon from POLITICO Pro Energy Editor Matt Daily.

Join Pro subscribers, expert reporters and key decision-makers from the executive branch, federal agencies and Congress for a full day of incisive policy conversations on July 17. Speakers include: Rep. Joe Crowley (D-N.Y.), Chairman, House Democratic Caucus, Kevin McAleenan, Commissioner, U.S. Customs and Border Patrol, and others. Register today.

WOTUS TO OMB TODAY: EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt will send the Waters of the U.S. rewrite to the Office of Management and Budget today, the administrator confirmed in a tweet. "In keeping w/ @POTUS's promise, we have stopped the 2015 #WOTUS rule & I just announced to folks in Lincoln that a much more reasonable #WOTUS rule will be sent to OMB tomorrow," he said Thursday. "Time to provide farmers & ranchers nationwide w/ regulatory certainty!" Pruitt discussed the new WOTUS rule at a roundtable discussion with Nebraska farmers on Thursday, where he said the agency will release "a back to the basics" rule that doesn't reinterpret the Clean Water Act, according to a reporter from the Lincoln Journal Star who attended.

WILL HE OR WON'T HE? Several GOP senators are pressing for an oversight hearing for Pruitt, Pro's Anthony Adragna reports. Pressure is mounting for the Environment and Public Works Committee to call on the administrator to discuss his ever-growing number of ethics scandals. On Thursday, three more Republicans — Shelley Moore Capito (W. Va.), Roger Wicker (Miss.) and Dan Sullivan (Alaska) — echoed Jim Inhofe and Joni Ernst's call for Pruitt to return to their committee for the first time since January.

"**The policies that the administrator** has moved forward on have really reaped a lot of benefits in terms of job creation in my state on the energy side, but it just seems like things keep cropping up, so I would agree with Sen. Inhofe," Capito told POLITICO. Chairman John Barrasso told Anthony, however, he still had "no immediate plans" to call Pruitt back before his committee. Read more.

BARRASSO WANTS MORE MONEY FOR EPA IG: The Senate Appropriations Committee on Thursday voted for a bill that would keep funding for EPA Inspector General Arthur Elkins at \$50 million next year, but Barrasso says he will push for more money. "The EPA's Inspector General requested \$62 million," Barrasso told ME in a statement. "I'd like to get as close as possible to that amount. I will continue to work with the Senate Appropriations Committee to get the Inspector General the funding he needs." Elkins said earlier this year that his current budget simply isn't cutting it — and that was before his office opened many of its ongoing probes into Pruitt. The Senate bill could hit the floor sometime this summer, which would be the next opportunity to amend it.

THE UNION PERSPECTIVE: John O'Grady, the president of AFGE Council #238 that represents more than 8,000 EPA workers, told reporters this week the administration is "just beginning to start the real attacks on the unions," citing recent executive orders weakening the influence of government unions and making it easier for agencies to fire civil servants. Asked about Pruitt, O'Grady said people within the agency are "disgusted" by the administrator, and the "almost daily" drip of scandals that would get any one else fired. "It's discouraging that the person that's supposed to be leading the agency that is dedicated to protecting human health and the environment is a person that apparently lacks basic ethical values," he said. "He is making a laughingstock out of his own party as far as I'm concerned and certainly out of this country."

WHITE HOUSE MOVING ON AUTO REGS: The White House Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs will meet with the Alliance of Automobile Manufacturers and the California Air Resources Board as part of the next round of discussions on fuel efficiency standards, Reuters reports. Officials will meet with the automakers trade group and CARB separately before unveiling the administration's proposal to reverse rules aimed at increasing fuel efficiency, participants told the news outlet. The plan is expected to be made available for public comment later in June or July, and point toward freezing requirements at 2020 levels. Read more.

NOMS: Trump said Thursday he intends to make Dan Simmons the permanent head of the Energy Department's energy efficiency and renewable energy office, where he's been for more than a year already. Simmons became EERE's principal deputy assistant secretary on May 1, 2017, after working on Trump's DOE transition and beachhead teams, Pro's Darius Dixon reports.

BLM'S FRIDAY HAPPY HOUR? Those wishing to speak today at Bureau of Land Management's scoping meeting on drilling lease sales in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge will have to face the luck of the draw — and probably skip the rest of their Friday night plans.

The final public meeting on the environmental impact statement for oil exploration on the coastal plain of ANWR kicks off at 4:30 p.m. at the National Housing Center. The meeting will begin with a brief presentation, with speakers set to speak at 5 p.m. and general public comments running from 6:30 until 9 p.m. The public comment, BLM said, will be chosen at random. "We anticipate there will be more speakers than time available for public testimony," said acting BLM Alaska State Director Karen Mouritsen in a statement, justifying that a random drawing would ensure "we hear from a sampling of views from all who attend." The agency also noted it will accept public comment through other means up until Tuesday. The agency wouldn't say whether it has taken this approach to public comment before.

Expect some protests: Subhankar Banerjee, a professor at the University of New Mexico, said he will attend today's meeting, after signing onto a letter this week with fellow academics that called attention to the biological, cultural and climate impacts of drilling in ANWR. Having spent more than 20 years studying the area, he told ME that the particular area of ANWR is one of the most biologically diverse nurseries in the world. BLM's scoping process is "absolutely unreal," Banerjee said, and he pointed out that although BLM held various meetings in Alaska on the lease sales, today's meeting is the only one in the contiguous U.S. "This timeline is inappropriate," he said. "Who is going to show up on a Friday evening?"

— **Gwich'in leaders and conservationists will hold a rally** at 4 p.m. outside of the hearing, where Alaska Wilderness League's Kristen Miller said 150 to 200 people are expected to attend. Speakers at the rally will include League of Conservation Voters' Gene Karpinski and Union of Concerned Scientists' Joel Clement, among others.

**** A message from the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association:** America's electric cooperatives directly employ 71,000 workers and create thousands of other jobs in their communities. For example, every 20 electric cooperative jobs in Arkansas generate an additional 35 indirect or induced jobs in the state. Learn more: <https://bit.ly/2kLKp7Z> **

RELATED TIMELINE: The Energy Information Administration said Thursday development of ANWR would increase U.S. crude oil production after 2030, based on three resource estimate values. "In all three cases, production from ANWR does not start until 2031 because of the time needed to acquire leases, explore, and develop the required production infrastructure," EIA said.

DEMOCRATS CALL OUT MOUNTAINTOP STUDY: Eight Democratic senators signed a letter asking Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke why a National Academies of Sciences, Engineering and Medicine study on the health effects of mountaintop removal mining was stopped. Earlier this week, Interior's Office of Inspector General found that "officials were unable to provide specific criteria, used for their determination whether to allow or cease certain grants and cooperative agreements" on the study. In Thursday's letter, the senators call on Zinke to explain the reasoning behind ending the study, as well as provide an accounting of the taxpayer money spent. Read it here.

APPROVAL NEEDED: Guidelines posted to the U.S. Geological Survey and obtained by The Washington Post show that scientists at the agency were told to submit their presentation titles for review by DOI in order to get approval to attend two major conferences. The Post writes: "The USGS's Office of Administration told employees they will have to provide a detailed 'attendee justification' when applying for travel approval for the annual meetings of the American Geophysical Union in Washington and the Geological Society of America in Indianapolis later this year." Read more.

COURT VACATES LEASES IN SANTA FE FOREST: The U.S. District Court for the District of New Mexico on Thursday vacated oil and gas leases in the Santa Fe National Forest for BLM's failure "to quantify and analyze the impacts of downstream greenhouse gas emissions on the environment." The federal court sent

the leases back to the BLM and U.S. Forest Service to perform further analysis of the impacts of oil and gas drilling to the forest, it said. Read the opinion [here](#).

MAIL CALL! NAAQS IT OUT: Democratic Reps. [Don Beyer](#) and [Marcy Kaptur](#) led a letter from 71 Democrats to Pruitt expressing concern over a [May memorandum](#) on the National Ambient Air Quality Standards process. The Democrats urged Pruitt "to withdraw the improper charge to [the Clean Air Scientific Advisory Committee] at once, and to make clear that CASAC — and EPA — will remain focused exclusively on the adverse public health effects that the Clean Air Act and a unanimous Supreme Court confirm are the only relevant statutory considerations during the health standard-setting processes." Read it [here](#).

— **The ranking members** of the Homeland Security, Transportation, Natural Resources and Energy and Commerce committees joined Thursday to send a letter to FEMA Administrator Brock Long on his agency's decision to end the Army Corps of Engineers' mission to help rebuild the grid in Puerto Rico. "FEMA's decision to scale back the Federal presence in Puerto Rico is troubling given that approximately 10,000 Americans still lack power, eight months after the storm," they write. Read it [here](#).

— **More than 30 green groups signed onto** to two letters opposing a [draft bill](#) currently being floated in the House that would penalize coastal states that prohibit offshore drilling. Read the letters [here](#) and [here](#).

NATURE CONSERVANCY JOINS IN: The Nature Conservancy announced Thursday it has joined the Carbon Capture Coalition as a member, recognizing in a statement that "a wide range of technologies must be developed and deployed to achieve greenhouse gas emission reductions necessary to avoid the worst impacts of climate change." The Carbon Capture Coalition was co-founded by the the Center for Climate and Energy Solutions and the Great Plains Institute in 2011 to advocate for carbon capture, use and storage.

MOVERS/SHAKERS: White House assistant press secretary Kelly Love, who handled issues related to energy and EPA, will depart today to join the Energy Department, two officials told Bloomberg. Love also handled media questions related to agriculture, legislative affairs and the Justice Department, and handled media for Donald Trump Jr., Ivanka Trump and Eric Trump during the campaign, Bloomberg reports. Read [more](#).

QUICK HITS

— Study: Climate change is moving fish around faster than laws can handle, [The Washington Post](#).

— Yellowstone superintendent officially learned of dismissal through press release, [The Hill](#).

— Trump's pick to lead weather agency spent 30 years fighting it, [Bloomberg Businessweek](#).

— In possible roadblock for Keystone XL, pipeline opponents gift land to Ponca, [Omaha World-Herald](#).

HAPPENING TODAY

8:15 a.m. — Securing America's Energy Future [forum](#) on its report titled "America's Workforce and the Self-Driving Future," 805 21st Street NW

10:00 a.m. — The Center for Strategic and International Studies [discussion](#) on Energy Department priorities, 1616 Rhode Island Avenue NW

12:00 p.m. — The Global America Business Institute [discussion](#) on spent fuel management in Sweden, 1001 Connecticut Avenue NW

CORRECTION: The June 14 edition of Morning Energy misidentified what state former Sen. Jim Bunning represented. He represented Kentucky.

THAT'S ALL FOR ME!

**** A message from the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association:** America's electric cooperatives provide 71,000 direct jobs and invest \$12 billion annually in local economies. Electric co-ops work directly with business and community leaders to create thousands of new jobs and couple investment from other sources to support hospitals, libraries and public safety. Learn more: <https://bit.ly/2kLKp7Z> **

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<https://subscriber.politicopro.com/newsletters/morning-energy/2018/06/where-in-the-world-is-rick-perry-251907>

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Trump splits with other G-20 leaders on climate change [Back](#)

By Andrew Restuccia | 07/08/2017 10:13 AM EDT

President Donald Trump emerged from the G-20 summit in Germany isolated from every other major economy on climate change, but the White House nonetheless scored small victories during the meeting.

After a tense round of negotiations, G-20 nations on Saturday reached a compromise on climate change, the last remaining issue of contention at the summit. Every country except the United States declared that the Paris climate change agreement is "irreversible" and must be implemented "swiftly." The U.S., on the other hand, declared its intention to pull out of the 2015 deal, which has won the backing of nearly 200 nations.

Several countries, including France, had objected to the United States' insistence on mentioning fossil fuels in the G-20's joint communique, leading to an eleventh-hour round of talks.

In the end, the United States appeared to win that fight, keeping the reference to fossil fuels, while pairing it with a call to use renewable energy.

"The United States of America states it will endeavor to work closely with other countries to help them access and use fossil fuels more cleanly and efficiently and help deploy renewable and other clean energy sources, given the importance of energy access and security in their nationally-determined contributions," the [joint communique](#) says.

Administration officials hailed the language as a victory, with one telling POLITICO the U.S. "scored big."

Supporters of the Paris climate agreement disagreed.

"It's nearly unprecedented to have text in a document like this one referring to what only one country believes. In that respect, it's a vacuous victory for the U.S., since it only confirms what everyone already knew they believe," said former State Department climate change adviser Andrew Light. "If anything, it only indicates the knots this administration will tie itself into in order to try to simultaneously appear to be appeasing their base and not alienating the rest of the world."

The United States also used the G-20 communique to underscore its intention to withdraw from the Paris climate deal and scrap former President Barack Obama's domestic emissions reduction plan (known in United

Nations parlance as a "nationally determined contribution"), while stressing that it hopes to continue working with other countries.

"The United States of America announced it will immediately cease the implementation of its current nationally-determined contribution and affirms its strong commitment to an approach that lowers emissions while supporting economic growth and improving energy security needs," the text says.

Foreign diplomats hope this language leaves room for the United States to remain in or rejoin the Paris deal if Trump writes a new domestic climate plan that reflects his priorities.

The 19 other G-20 nations all underscored their support for the Paris agreement and endorsed a broad German-backed climate and energy plan, which includes a detailed road map for reducing emissions.

The unity is a coup for German Chancellor Angela Merkel, who sought to minimize disagreements among the rest of the G-20 amid U.S. opposition to the Paris agreement. There had been some speculation that Saudi Arabia and Turkey might object to certain portions of the climate language, but Merkel and other leaders worked to ensure they were on board.

Still, that language was weakened slightly in the final negotiations, as part of what one diplomat called a "tit-for-tat" with the United States. A previous draft version of the text said countries "agree" that the Paris deal is "irreversible." The final version uses less firm language, a seemingly minor tweak that caught the attention of some U.S. officials and foreign diplomats.

"The Leaders of the other G20 members state that the Paris Agreement is irreversible," the communique says.

G-20 countries similarly insisted that the United States use the word "state" to characterize its position, worrying that stronger language could imply broader agreement among other nations.

The U.S. has been an outsider on climate change at international talks since Trump took office.

At the May G-7 meeting in Italy, the U.S. declined to join other countries in backing the Paris deal, saying it was in the process of reviewing its policies. After Trump's June announcement that he intends to withdraw from the Paris agreement, the U.S. position was relegated to a footnote in a joint statement released after a G-7 environment ministers meeting in Germany last month.

David Herszenhorn contributed to this report.

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GOP pressure mounts for Pruitt oversight hearing [Back](#)

By Anthony Adragna | 06/14/2018 05:18 PM EDT

Several Senate Republicans — including the chamber's second in command — voiced support Thursday for bringing EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt before the Environment and Public Works Committee for an oversight hearing to discuss his ever-growing number of ethics scandals.

Three more EPW Republicans — Shelley Moore Capito (W.Va.), Roger Wicker (Miss.) and Dan Sullivan (Alaska) — joined their colleagues Jim Inhofe (Okla.) and Joni Ernst (Iowa) in pressing for Pruitt to return to their committee for the first time since January. Their comments add pressure on Chairman John Barrasso (R-Wyo.) to request that Pruitt make another appearance amid a stream of scandals.

News emerged Wednesday that Pruitt had pressed his staff to ask GOP donors to help find a job for his wife, Marlyn, who later secured a position at a conservative legal group — news that prompted some conservatives to call for his ouster.

"The policies that the administrator has moved forward on have really reaped a lot of benefits in terms of job creation in my state on the energy side, but it just seems like things keep cropping up, so I would agree with Sen. Inhofe," Capito told POLITICO.

"I'm always happy with oversight opportunities," Sullivan said.

But Barrasso told POLITICO he had "no immediate plans" to call Pruitt back.

Congressional Republicans have expressed concern for months about Pruitt's conduct, but they have stopped short of calling for his resignation, deferring to President Donald Trump. Meanwhile, Democrats on the panel have repeatedly demanded Barrasso call Pruitt to testify.

White House press secretary Sarah Huckabee Sanders said Thursday "certainly we have some areas of concern in some of these allegations" but declined further comment on whether the latest revelation about Pruitt had affected the administration's thoughts on his fate.

Majority Whip John Cornyn (R-Texas) told POLITICO Pruitt's future rests with the president, but he said he favored holding an oversight hearing.

"The drip drip drip is not helpful — at all," he said.

Lisa Murkowski (R-Alaska), who oversees the Appropriations subcommittee responsible for funding EPA, also said an oversight hearing was appropriate given the continuing revelations.

"You all keep asking me questions about him," she told POLITICO. "I don't have the answers for him. I think he needs to answer."

The calls for Pruitt's appearance come one day after leading conservatives, including Fox News host Laura Ingraham and National Review, called for his resignation. Inhofe, a longtime ally of the EPA chief, told Ingraham on her radio show Wednesday the allegations "upset me as much as they upset you," and he later urged Barrasso to hold a hearing to address the issues.

Pruitt has also drawn rebukes from Ernst and Chuck Grassley (R-Iowa) for his moves to excuse several refineries from complying with biofuels blending requirements under the Renewable Fuel Standard.

"I support Sen. @JimInhofe's call for a hearing on EPA Administrator Pruitt's scandals; and I continue to urge the President to take a hard look at Mr. Pruitt's actions - as I do not feel that Mr. Pruitt is serving @realDonaldTrump's best interests," Ernst added later in a tweet.

Not all EPW Republicans backed the call for Pruitt's appearance, though several said they would support such a move if Barrasso pursued it.

"If the chairman says that we should do that, then I would be supportive," [Mike Rounds](#) (R-S.D.) told POLITICO.

Darius Dixon contributed to this report.

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Trump issues orders making it easier to fire federal employees [Back](#)

By Lorraine Woellert | 05/25/2018 05:10 PM EDT

President Donald Trump on Friday issued a series of executive orders to weaken the influence of government unions and make it easier for agencies to fire civil servants.

The orders will standardize agency rules to make it easier and quicker to remove poorly performing employees. They also direct federal agencies to renegotiate their labor contracts and cap the amount of paid time that workers can take off to conduct union-related business.

"The president is fulfilling his promise to promote more efficient government by reforming our civil service rules," Andrew Bremberg, director of the president's Domestic Policy Council, told reporters. "These executive orders will make it easier for agencies to remove poor-performing employees and ensure that taxpayer dollars are more efficiently used."

The changes could save taxpayers more than \$100 million a year, the White House estimated. It referenced a 2015 Government Accountability Office [report](#) that found it can take a year or more to dismiss a permanent federal employee.

The largest federal employee union condemned Friday's orders.

"This is more than union busting — it's democracy busting," said J. David Cox Sr., president of the American Federation of Government Employees. "This administration seems hellbent on replacing a civil service that works for all taxpayers with a political service that serves at its whim."

In addition to hemming in union power, the executive orders could be abused to reduce accountability or punish whistleblowers, said Nick Schwellenbach, director of investigations at the nonprofit Project on Government Oversight.

"Weakening civil service protection laws would make the government less effective and put us all at risk," he said. "It would impede Congress's ability to conduct oversight of the executive branch: Congress's best sources of information are the employees inside agencies, and without robust protections and due process, more sources will remain silent."

The executive orders are Trump's latest salvo against the government workforce, which he has promised to reform as part of his "drain the swamp" agenda.

They direct agencies to charge rent to employees who use federal office space for union activity and to stop covering travel expenses for non-agency business.

Preference given to long-tenured workers will be eliminated. The common practice of agency gag orders, in which managers promise to keep silent about employees in exchange for their resignations, will be eliminated. Civil servants whose performance isn't up to par will get 30 days to show improvements.

Agencies will be required to report disciplinary activity to the Office of Personnel Management for publication. They are also directed to negotiate new contracts with unions, which also will be made public. Unions will be charged for the use of agency office space.

The use of "official time" — legally sanctioned time off for labor-related activities — will be capped at 25 percent of an employee's working hours.

Republicans on the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee found this week that more than 12,500 employees took advantage of official time in 2017. The Department of Veterans Affairs was among the worst offenders, the House panel found. There, 472 employees spent 100 percent of their working hours on labor-management-related business in fiscal 2017, according to the GOP report. Those employees included a VA nurse anesthetist and dentist each making more than \$190,000 a year.

The moves are sure to be challenged by labor groups and Democrats, who have accused the administration of targeting labor for political purposes.

Meanwhile, worker complaints to the Federal Labor Relations Authority are piling up because the agency has been without a presidentially appointed general counsel since November. The vacancy has prevented labor complaints cases from being prosecuted.

A senior administration official said on Friday that the White House had no announcement to make on the labor relations appointment.

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DOE beachhead member lands senior EERE post [Back](#)

By Darius Dixon | 05/01/2017 05:30 PM EDT

The Institute for Energy Research's Daniel Simmons will take up a leading post at the Department of Energy as the acting assistant secretary for the Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy, the agency said in an email to staff today.

DOE said Simmons, a former vice president for policy at the libertarian-leaning IER, would take the role of principal deputy assistant secretary for the office effective today. However, without an EERE assistant secretary who has been nominated and confirmed by the Senate, Simmons can only hold the position on a temporary basis.

DOE confirmed Simmons' appointment.

Simmons was a member of President Donald Trump's transition and beachhead teams at DOE. Before joining IER, he directed the Natural Resources Task Force at the American Legislative Exchange Council.

Steven Chalk, who had served in the position for the past few months, will now return to his role as the deputy assistant secretary for operations, according to the email.

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White House to tap Simmons as permanent EERE head [Back](#)

By Darius Dixon | 06/14/2018 05:39 PM EDT

President Donald Trump intends to make Dan Simmons the permanent head of the Energy Department's energy efficiency and renewable energy office, after more than a year as its top official.

The White House announced it plans to nominate Simmons to be the assistant secretary for EERE, a division that often takes a backseat to other offices under Republican administration. EERE is one of the largest accounts within the agency and its top job is one of the few remaining vacancies among the brass at DOE. Simmons became EERE's principal deputy assistant secretary on May 1, 2017, after working on Trump's DOE transition and beachhead teams.

Before joining the administration, Simmons was the vice president for policy at the libertarian-leaning Institute for Energy Research, which regularly attacked the Obama administration's renewable energy programs. He also directed the Natural Resources Task Force at the American Legislative Exchange Council.

WHAT'S NEXT: Simmons' nomination falls to the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee.

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Pruitt changes NAAQS review to consider 'adverse' effects of standards [Back](#)

By Alex Guillén | 05/10/2018 10:13 AM EDT

EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt today directed the agency to change the review process for a critical air quality program to include the potential "adverse" effects of tighter standards.

In a memo signed Wednesday, Pruitt directed the Clean Air Scientific Advisory Committee, which advises on National Ambient Air Quality Standards issues, to provide advice on background pollution concentrations and the "adverse public health, welfare, social, economic or energy effects" from setting and achieving NAAQS standards.

The Supreme Court has previously ruled that EPA cannot consider implementation costs when setting NAAQS standards. Pruitt's memo argues that such information, even if not used to set a standard, can provide "important policy context for the public, co-regulators and EPA."

Pruitt also committed EPA to finish reviews of two controversial standards before the end of President Donald Trump's first term.

Even as EPA continues internal deliberations over revising the 2015 ozone standard, Pruitt committed the agency to meeting the October 2020 deadline to again review the standard. He also directed EPA to complete its review of the particulate matter standard by December 2020.

The memo also:

- Calls for "more efficient ways" to conduct the scientific and policy assessments that underlie NAAQS reviews;
- Requests a "clearer distinction" between the scientific conclusions and the "wider range of policy concerns" that Pruitt considers in setting standards;
- Urges CASAC members who disagree with the panel's consensus to "share their own individual opinions;" and
- Advises EPA to issue implementation rules and guidance concurrent with NAAQS revisions.

WHAT'S NEXT: The memo directs EPA to begin work on the next ozone review in order to complete it by October 2020.

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